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LETTERS FROM ABROAD

REV. CANON CLAYTON

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LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

BY THE

REV. CANON CLAYTON, M.A.,

RECTOR OF STANHOPE, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE
LORD BISHOP OF BIPON.



SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.
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NOTICE.

THE following letters appeared first in 1877, in the localized *Stanhope Magazine*. They were addressed, month by month, to the parishioners of Stanhope, under the title, "A Voice from a Foreign Land." They appear to have interested my own people, and also others into whose hands they came. It is hoped that, by God's blessing, the letters will be made useful in this more permanent form. This will be the case if the readers are led, by what follows, to be more jealous of any departure from the teaching of our Reformed Church, and are also made to prize more highly the Lord's Day and God's inspired Word.

Stanhope Rectory.

July 19th, 1878.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

LETTER I.

I HAVE thought that it may prove interesting to you, my parishioners and friends, and also be a relief to Mr. Wagstaff, if during my absence from England I supply month by month, for our Stanhope Magazine, some observations and reflections concerning these far-away places.

Through God's protecting care, I arrived here safely on Saturday evening, having left Stanhope on Monday morning. Had I wished, I could have travelled this distance of 1,000 miles more rapidly; but, in my present state of health, I thought it prudent not to expose myself to unnecessary fatigue. I will narrate my proceedings day by day, in order.

On *Monday* (Jan. 1), I quitted my now desolate Rectory with very different feelings from those with which I had usually left home before. I was beginning the new year as a solitary pilgrim, without my beloved companion; alone, as it were, in the world, and yet not alone; for I trust that, through God's

undeserved mercy, I can say, "Immanuel is with me; and therefore will I fear no evil." Mr. Fox and Mr. Hill, who had been most kind and sympathizing in my deep sorrow, travelled with me as far as Auckland; and Mr. Wagstaff came on with me to York. In London I was met by other kind friends. On *Tuesday* morning I left London for Dover; and was joined at Tunbridge on my way, by my nephew, Robert Clayton, whom you know, and who, having spent last winter in Brussels, can speak French well. On *Wednesday* morning he and I left Dover for Calais. On board the steamer were many invalids, who, like myself, were seeking a warmer climate. Next to me in the cabin below deck was a young man, who was suffering from a violent cough, and who at each cough brought up blood. There was also a lady, who was going with her maid to Algiers, and who afterwards travelled with us in the same railway carriage. She was evidently far gone in some consumptive complaint.

After crossing the English Channel, as soon as we landed at Calais, the sights we saw and the sounds we heard all plainly told us that we were no longer in happy England, but in a foreign land. At the railway station, where the passengers were eager to obtain refreshments before the train started, the hubbub and jabber was most confusing, the English travellers, many of them, not understanding the French waiters; and the French waiters, many of them, not understanding the English travellers—the English, as St. Paul says (1 Cor. xiv. 11), being as barbarians to the French, and the French, in turn, being as barbarians to the English. On the platform were some French soldiers, with their red trousers and light blue pale-

tots. Here, also, were French women, very few with bonnets, most of them wearing clean white caps, and others of them entering the train with no covering whatever on their heads. Here, too, we saw the strange sight of gentlemen kissing gentlemen, as they bade each other an affectionate welcome or farewell. The proverbial politeness, too, of the French work-people was here apparent, as we observed them taking off their hats to the washerwomen and others of their own rank of life about the station.

The country from Calais, through Boulogne and Amiens, to Paris, was very uninteresting. It was flat, and oftentimes marshy; much like the journey on the Great Northern line between Peterborough and Huntingdon. We passed through large tracts where no hedge-row and no wall fences were anywhere to be seen. On each side of the main roads, on which were no hedges or walls, appeared an endless row of tall poplars, planted at regular intervals, looking very formal. We arrived at Paris at six p.m.; and, as we drove through the streets to our hotel, we were much struck with the grandeur of the buildings, and the magnificence and brilliancy of the shop windows and cafés. Here, too, an unusual sound met our ears. I refer to the tinkling of ten or twelve little bells, dangling on the necks of the horses of almost every vehicle, which sound made me hope for the time when, even in gay and pleasure-loving Paris, there shall be (Zech. xiv. 20) upon the bells of the horses, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."

On *Thursday* morning we quitted our capacious hotel, with its 400 or 500 beds, and crossed the Seine, in sight of Notre Dame, the Metropolitan

Cathedral, and left Paris for Tours. As we went through the suburbs, we thought of the pain which the Parisians must have felt when they saw those very suburbs in 1871 occupied by the German armies. At the corners of the roads, in the country, as we went along, past Orleans and other towns, we observed, here and there a cross, or a figure of the virgin Mary, erected for the adoration of the poor peasants, who really make the virgin and the saints their intercessors, instead of the Lord Jesus, who is the "one Mediator between God and man." These strange scenes, however, at two o'clock in the afternoon, could not divert my thoughts from my sad loss, as I then remembered how solemn to me had been the toll of the Stanhope bell at that hour on the Thursday before. But I was enabled to raise my thoughts from the lifeless body lying in our churchyard to the justified and happy spirit rejoicing in the presence of her Saviour.

On our arrival at Tours we went round the city, which is large and beautiful, and contains about 50,000 people. On my starting from England I was advised to provide myself with soap, as I was told I should find none at any of the hotels. This I discovered to be the case. But at Tours we did see soap, and saw it used in a curious manner. We went to the noble bridge, which spans the river Loire, and on the side of that river we saw large barges filled with women, who were washing linen in the river, as it flowed past, and who were making a copious use of coarse French soap. The same sight met our eyes on the edges of other rivers as we passed along. There is here a noble cathedral, and an archbishop's

palace. In the cathedral, besides the high altar, there are in the side-chapels ten or twelve other altars, which are dedicated to various saints. In one of those chapels we saw a wax figure of a baby Christ, before which lights were burning, and before which some women and young persons were kneeling at their devotions. Behind the high altar there was a large image of the virgin Mary, with a crown of silver on her head, and with a baby in her arms, also crowned, and before these two images, around which candles were burning, we saw several women offering their prayers on their knees. On all sides were confessionals, and there were about ten or twelve pictures called the stations of the cross. As one result of Popery, which never puts up the fourth and the other commandments in her churches, and which keeps back the Bible from her votaries, there was stuck up in the street a placard announcing a ball to be given at the skating-rink on the following Sunday evening.

On *Friday* morning, after examining the old and quaint portions of the city, we started for Bordeaux, 220 miles off. In this portion of our journey, which took us through Poitiers and Angoulême, I was forcibly reminded by what I saw of what I had read in the Scriptures. I saw oxen ploughing; and I thought of Elisha (1 Kings xix. 19) who was found by Elijah ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. In one place I saw oxen yoked together and drawing a cart; and I thought of the ark (1 Sam. vi. 7), conveyed by two milch kine on a cart to Bethshemesh. In a field I saw sheep and goats feeding together; and the idea at once occurred to me that as easily as that shepherd can distinguish between those sheep and those goats, so

easily will our Lord hereafter make a separation bewixt the saved and the lost (Matt. xxv. 32). As we approached Bordeaux, we travelled through miles and miles of vineyards.

The next morning, *Saturday*, we explored Bordeaux, a noble city, full of trees, with broad streets and boulevards, and with 200,000 inhabitants. In the extensive port we saw ships laden, not with coal, but with firewood; for in the south of France wood is almost invariably used instead of coal for domestic purposes. Here, too, as at Tours, we saw in the cathedral a painful (and were not the subject so solemn, I might add, a ludicrous) sight. It was (6th Jan.) the Feast of the Epiphany. In one of the side-chapels there was a representation of the visit of the wise men of the east. There was a large space in this side-chapel covered with moss; on that moss were tiny figures of sheep feeding; and in a cottage behind were seen the virgin and Joseph, and the wise men, all bending towards a baby made of wax; while before this baby-house candles were burning, and some women and children were on their knees praying. With such a Christianity exhibited before their eyes, and with no corrective teaching from an open Bible, we do not marvel that the great body of the *men* in France are either sceptics or have no religion at all. The priests here were numerous. They come abroad in wide black hats, and long black cloaks, wearing on their necks black bands with white edgings, their chins and cheeks all closely shaven.

But I must here stop, and relate our journey from Bordeaux to Arcachon in our next number. I only add one reflection, and it is a very solemn one. My

double loss—the loss of health, and the loss of my partner—is to me a very severe affliction. It must be at the same time a severe affliction to a parish, when its chief pastor and his loving and active helper in parochial matters, are both removed. I hope you and I will both derive spiritual profit from this trial which God has laid upon us. We must seek to avoid *neglecting* to improve such a visitation. We must also not be *overwhelmed* by it. God speaks to us as His children, when He says, “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, *nor faint* when thou art rebuked of Him.” (Heb. xii. 5).

C. CLAYTON.

Arcachon, Basses Pyrenees, France, Jan. 19th, 1877.

LETTER II.

IN the letter I wrote for your February magazine I described our journey from Stanhope to Bordeaux. We arrived at Bordeaux on Friday. On Saturday we quitted Bordeaux for Arcachon. Our journey, by rail, was almost entirely, for thirty-four miles, through vineyards. You may judge of the extent of these vineyards when I mention that in France there are only twenty-five millions of acres of pasture and meadow, while there are no fewer than five millions of acres set apart for the growth of vines.

This is the most important part of the vine-growing district. In my last I told you how often, as I travelled, I was reminded of some part of Scripture. So it was in that journey on Saturday. As we went along I observed every here and there in the vineyards

a tumble-down sort of hut, used, I suppose, for putting away tools and for other purposes. These huts looked very desolate, as do also the vineyards themselves at this season; and I was thereby reminded of the wretched condition of Judæa and Jerusalem, as described by Isaiah (i. 7, 8): "Your country is desolate . . . and the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard; as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers."

Arcachon, at which we arrived after two and a-half hours' journey from Bordeaux, is a sort of French Bournemouth. It is situated on the south side of a large bay, which runs inland to the east, out of the Bay of Biscay. The Bay of Biscay is about seven miles off; and there is a continuous loud roar of its waves heard here, whenever the weather is in the least windy. Arcachon consists of three or more long streets, running parallel to the shore, and is studded with picturesque villas, called *châlets*, some in the Swiss and some in the Chinese style; some built on the rising ground behind, and some mixed with the pine-trees of the adjacent forest. This forest is seventy or eighty miles long, and runs down almost to the frontiers of Spain. The forests of France are very extensive, occupying no less than twenty millions of acres of the country. Mixed with these pine-trees are a few oaks, and also cork-trees, with their very thick barks. The pine-trees are tapped every spring for turpentine, which is caught in little tin trays beneath.

Arcachon is used chiefly by English, American, and Irish visitors during the winter; and by the French, most of them from Bordeaux, during the summer. It is a most sunny region. There is very little rain; and what does fall, chiefly falls at night. I have seen no

ice nor snow nor hoar-frost since I came. So mild indeed and dry is the climate that I have never been kept in-doors a single day; and in January and February you might see men, women, and children sitting about, in the open air, in front of their houses and cafés, and with no fires in their sitting-rooms. The fires would surprise you; they are all of wood. There are no fire-grates. The wood is burnt upon the hearth-stone; and, from the proximity of the forest, is much cheaper than coal. Coal is two pounds a ton, and is imported chiefly from Sunderland. The wood is bought at the different depôts, and is also to be had from men going about with it to sell out of their carts drawn by bullocks. These bullocks have bells on their necks, as I said the horses have. Many dogs and fowls also have bells, to prevent their being lost, I presume, in the forest; so that we are scarcely ever free from the tinkling of these bells either close at hand or far-off.

At Arcachon, too, I have often seen what I also saw at Tours and Paris. Happily what I am now about to mention is not to be seen in England. In England, on the noble stone portico of the Royal Exchange in London, appear in large characters the words, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." This most appropriate motto was suggested, I believe, by his Royal Highness, the late Prince Consort. His object was to remind not only the merchant-princes of our metropolis, but all the world besides, that we, as a nation, ascribe our success in commerce and business solely to that mighty Being, Who is the Maker of heaven and earth, and Whose alone is the silver and the gold. In France, as regards

the shop-keepers, things are different. Here over the entrance to many shops and stores there is seen, in large letters, painted or gilded, the name either of the virgin Mary, or of some saint. This is to intimate, I suppose, that to that patron saint the inmates look for their protection and blessing. But, worse still, over some shop-doors, both here and at Tours, I have seen the inscription, "*au pauvre diable*" ("to the poor devil"). I have inquired as to the meaning of this; but no one seems to know, or the people are unwilling to confess, why this inscription is put up. If it is meant to ask for the devil's patronage and favour, it is shocking indeed. But if it is done only in joke, which I hardly think can be the case, it is very profane. Those persons who make a jest about the devil, little remember what a reality he is, and how he is termed by God Himself "the prince of this world," "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience," our "adversary," "going about as a roaring lion," a "liar," a "murderer," and a "deceiver of the nations."

I fear, too, there is little or no regard paid to the sacred Name of the Almighty Himself. A common exclamation here among all classes is "*Mon Dieu*," (my God), in direct violation of the third commandment, which says—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

At Arcachon, the soil is so sandy (in fact, it seems one vast sandbank cast up from the sea), that the people are obliged to fetch earth from a great distance, if they wish to make anything like a garden. And as there are but few gardens and no hedge-rows, there is little or no food for birds. I have once or twice heard

a bird, but have never yet seen one, not even a sparrow. One singular sight I have seen ; and that is every now and then on the roads you come across a long string of caterpillars, joined one to another, and moving like a train of railway carriages, sometimes four or five feet in length. Another sight too would surprise you, and that is the bread. This is made up into long loaves, sometimes the length of a man's leg, and of about the same thickness. This bread is very sour.

I spoke about the Sunday Ball at Tours. Here too things are much the same. I have to-day seen a large printed bill announcing a public auction, to commence at 12.30, on Sunday. There is too "a grand Concert every Sunday evening at eight." I also saw placards announcing performances at the theatre on the Sunday. One shocked me much. It announced a comedy entitled *Les Memoires du Diable* (the devil's history) —the devil himself, I doubt not, being employed as one of the characters in the play. As I go to and return from our Protestant service on Sunday morning and afternoon, I meet working-men in their week-day clothes ; and I am also pained at seeing some men laying down gas-pipes, and others employed as masons or carpenters in building houses. The shops, too, are all of them open, just as during the week. If the people have been in the early morning to hear or see mass, they seem to think their Sabbath duties to be over.

Some then go out in parties of pleasure on horseback ; others are playing at croquet ; and some go forth with their dogs and guns in search of game. Even at the principal door of the cathedral, I see every

Sunday one or more stalls erected for the sale of sweet-meats to the congregation as it comes out; and immediately afterwards, under the cathedral walls, I have seen the chorister-boys (acolytes) playing at marbles; the priests looking on just as though no Divine command directed us not to "do our own ways, nor to find our own pleasure on the Sabbath" (Isa. lviii. 13).

I have seen to-day two sights which probably most of you never witnessed. This morning I saw several times one or two fat oxen being led through the streets, decorated with ribbons and flowers, and other ornaments, and accompanied by men, themselves carrying flowers and decked with ribbons. Upon asking what it meant, I was told "this is *bœuf gras* (fat beef) day." Next week is Lent, and after next Tuesday, in theory, no more meat is to be eaten till Lent is over. The different butchers, therefore, of the place send round these animals, to show their customers the kind of beef they may expect to be provided with next Tuesday, the feast-day before Ash-Wednesday. The other sight I saw to-day was a mass for the dead. The body was placed, with eighteen lighted candles around it, in the centre aisle of the cathedral. The priest and choristers, amid lights at the so-called altar, (it was broad day) were chanting their requiem service; and then, after a priest had sprinkled holy water and incense upon the coffin, the whole of the large congregation went up, the men first, and then the women, and kissed a silver crucifix which was held out to them by a priest from over the altar rails. The coffin was then brought out, and was preceded by a young man holding up a lofty cross of brass, and by

the priests chanting, and was so conveyed to the cemetery for the rest of the service.

But I must now conclude; and I do so with two reflections. (1) How great are our religious privileges in Protestant England!

In England God's Word is freely circulated and extensively read. In England, in consequence, the Sabbath is observed, and is esteemed by many as a foretaste of that eternal Sabbath which is reserved for God's people in heaven. In England, too, the childish and superstitious ceremonies which meet you on every side in France are happily unknown. Had not God, in His great mercy to England, opened the eyes of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and of our other Reformers three hundred years ago, our parish churches, like those of France, Spain, and Italy, might have been in the hands of Popish priests up to this day. How great then are our privileges! God grant that these spiritual advantages may be properly used by us; and not issue through our carelessness, and neglect, in our deeper condemnation! To whom much is given, of them much will be required. The servant who knows his Lord's will and does it not, will be beaten with many stripes.

My last reflection is—(2) What a passing scene is life!

In France I feel myself to be only a foreigner. I see on the walls bills announcing local elections, "*Candidat General Bourdillon*," or "*Candidat*" some one else; but I say to myself this is nothing to me. I shall soon leave Arcachon. I am a stranger here. My home is at Stanhope. Now such should be our feelings with regard to our continuance on earth.

Here we have no continuing city. Here we are all of us but strangers and foreigners ; and we must soon leave everything here below. How little should we therefore be concerned about our present wants and difficulties ! Here in France I feel the absence of this comfort and of that convenience. But I think to myself, It does not much signify ; I am here only for a little while ; I shall soon get all I need at home. So should it be with us as to spiritual things. Our home is in heaven. Thither should our thoughts be continually travelling. Some of the English are every now and then leaving Arcachon, and going back to England. So how many of our friends are continually leaving us for another world ! How many reminders, on this subject, have you had lately in Wear-dale ! Mr. Maughan, Mr. Duberley, my dear wife, and others, were taken before I left you. And since I left, T. Thompson, Jane Tweddle, G. Vickers, W. Lonsdale, F. Raine, Mrs. Tanner, Mrs. John Emerson, Mr. Page, Mr. Charlton, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. McKenzie, Mrs. Proudfoot, and others, have departed to their final account. And how many more will be called away and fixed for ever, either in heaven or hell, before I return, who shall say ? God alone knoweth. Whoever of you is taken, if you die in Christ, you will not need our pity ; for you will be happy indeed, as it is " far better " to depart and to be " with Christ," than to continue here in a world of temptation and suffering and sin. And you *will* die, my dear friends, in Christ, if you will but seek the gift of His Holy Spirit, and the forgiveness of your iniquities through the blood and righteousness of Christ.

"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure ;
Death hath no sting beside.
The law gives sin its damning power ;
But Christ my Saviour died."

C. CLAYTON.

Arcachon, S.W. France, Feb. 1877.

P.S.—I hope that this warmer climate is gradually, by God's blessing, removing my long-continued cough. For your sake, and for my own sake, I am very sorry to lose the valuable services of Mr. and Mrs. Wagstaff; but for their sake and the sake of Rookhope, I rejoice at his preferment. It now remains for you and for me to make it a matter of earnest prayer that the great "Lord of the harvest" will send us a suitable successor to Mr. Wagstaff,—a curate "full of the Holy Ghost,"—"an able minister of the New Testament,"—"a pastor after God's own heart." You cannot confer a greater favour on me, nor bring a richer blessing on yourselves, than by continuing "instant in prayer" for so precious a gift.

LETTER III.

WE had an agreeable surprise here yesterday. We were favoured, most unexpectedly, with a call from two of our Stanhope parishioners, Major and Mrs. Rippon. They were grievously disappointed with Arcachon. They found it too cold,—as cold, they said, as Stanhope. They, therefore, leave us soon for Spain, and will thence return to Pau. Arcachon, I confess, has been very cold of late. One morning the thermometer was down to freezing-point, and there

was a thin coating of ice visible. Last Sunday was so cold, that I was afraid to venture out ; but that was the first day I had been kept in since I arrived. All January and February was mild, like May in England ; the sun shining almost every day, with a cloudless sky. We have had no snow at all.

The houses here are uncomfortably cold. They are built mainly as summer residences, with thin walls. They are almost all shut up during the winter. The large rents the owners receive for the summer make the houses pay well, notwithstanding the loss of the winter rents. You may understand how popular Arcachon is in summer as a sea-side place, and also as a sea-bathing resort, when I inform you that whereas the population now is about 3,000, in the summer it reaches 15,000. Every place, even the smallest and most tumble-down wooden shed, is then let for sleeping apartments. During the day, the visitors live almost entirely in the open air ; and to this end, nearly every house is built with large over-hanging roofs, and with open verandahs or galleries running all round, both on the ground-floor, and in the upper stories.

Through the coldness of the weather, and the violence of the wind, I have of late confined myself to the warm forest, and have not ventured to walk, as I did in January and February, on the sea-shore. The walks on the shore are very pleasant, since, what with the passing ships and boats, and the vast flocks of wild ducks and sea-gulls, there is always a variety in the scene. One day we went down by sea in a boat seven miles to the mouth of Arcachon Bay ; and there we came in sight of the rough waves of the Bay of

Biscay. We landed on the south shore, and ascended a remarkable sand-hill. That sand-hill has been entirely formed within the last seven years. It is composed of sand drifted from the opposite sand-banks (on the other side of the bay), and has so rapidly increased, that it has risen quite above the tops of the pines, some of which are thirty or forty feet high; and it is now so solid that you may go upon it without danger of sinking in, not only on foot, but even on horseback. The sudden appearance of this sand-mountain may, perhaps, help to check the rash theories of some of our modern geologists, who tell you that such and such deposits must have taken thousands and thousands of years for their formation.

As I have gone along the shore, I have often thought of Isaiah's description of the wicked man. I have observed the unceasing billowing of the waters; and I have seen those waters, as they retired, leaving behind them shells, jelly-fish, weeds, wood, and sticks, the whole a fit emblem of the unconverted man, who is "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." How different are God's own people! Washed in Christ's blood, converted and sanctified by Christ's Spirit! Being justified by faith, they have "peace"—"peace with God," through our Lord Jesus Christ. "My people," God says, "shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

The late rough weather has also been very trying to the fishermen. This neighbourhood is famed for its

extensive oyster-beds. In carrying on this oyster business the women take almost as active a part as the men. I saw one of their large boats the other day going out with four women rowing. These women are oddly dressed. They wear trousers like men, and have also thick and high leather-boots; as they have to wade oftentimes in the sea more than knee-deep, in carrying their baskets to and fro. The fishermen are exposed to great dangers from the capsizing of their boats. Five men lost their lives here only last week.

One of them was a very painful case. His boat upset; and, although there were at the time many persons on the shore who witnessed the accident, he could not be saved. There was another boat on the shore; but in it there were no oars. And while the spectators were running to get the oars, the poor man sank, and was never seen again. The agonized wife was among the crowd, and her screams for help for her drowning husband were, I need not say, most affecting and distressing. The people have been very kind since, in raising a charity fund for her and her three fatherless children. It was an additional loss that, through the unavoidable delay, the upset boat, which belonged to her husband, also went down, and cannot be recovered.

In connection with this sad event I thought—If it is so melancholy to witness the accidental destruction of men's bodies, how much more melancholy is it to witness the wilful destruction of men's souls. Every godly man among you will know from his own inward experience what I mean. This idea made David exclaim, "I am horribly afraid for the wicked." "Rivers of water run down my eyes, because men keep not Thy law." The same sight of the wicked, sinking

down into perdition, before his eyes, made the Apostle Paul exclaim, in reference to his Jewish brethren, "I have great sorrow, and continual heaviness of heart for my kinsmen after the flesh." And as to the unconverted Gentiles, he said, "I have told you before, and now tell you, even weeping, that their end is destruction." I need not say how the same feelings often come over Mr. Wagstaff and myself with respect to many of you, when we perceive the danger you are in of perishing for ever. We see your peril, but you see it not. We warn you of the position you are in, but you are like deaf men, you hear us not. That poor fisherman perished because there was no help at hand. But your perishing is wilful. The life-boat is at your very side; but you refuse to enter it. "Ye will not come unto Me," says Christ; and therefore there is no alternative; you must be left to yourself. Your blood is upon your own head. You must perish. "But why will ye die? Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord." If therefore any of you perish, it will be because you reject the Saviour. The poor fisherman perished because there was no man ready to deliver.

Beside the oyster-trade, there is much business done in collecting the turpentine from pine-trees. It is very curious and somewhat alarming to see the pine-climbers ascending with their naked feet these tall trees, with apparently little or no foot-hold; but practice has given them clearer heads and firmer feet than you or I would have in that position. As nearly all the neighbourhood is covered by these pine-forests, there are but few farms. I was interested, however, the other day to see how a flock of sheep was being

tended by a shepherd. This shepherd would have surprised you. He wore a rough sheep-skin over his other dress, and was striding about among the sheep on lofty stilts. It was very amusing to observe what long steps he took, and how rapidly and easily he moved. I have seen others also, both men and boys, going along the roads on these elevated supports,—“seven-leagued hoots.”

I feel much for the spiritual welfare of these poor shepherds, and the rest of this population who are receiving little or no Bible instruction. Bible instruction is certainly not given them by the Roman Catholic priests; and there is, I fear, but little done by the French Protestants. In Arcachon there is a French Protestant Church; but there is service in it only on one Sunday in the month, and on a Tuesday afternoon. I went to the service last Tuesday; but I found the attendance, I am sorry to say, very small. In that same church we had an interesting address in French from Major Malan, who gave us an account of the work of the French Evangelical Society in South Africa. The service on that occasion was peculiar. The people sat when they sang, and stood when they prayed. The hymn in French, with no musical accompaniment, was sweetly harmonious and simple.

We have had also other religious advantages. We had a meeting in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, when the Rev. Mr. Honiss supplied us with full information as to the progress of the Gospel in India. We also had here the Rev. Mr. Moran, secretary of the Colonial and Continental Church Society. With the Continental part of the Society's work we

are deeply interested, inasmuch as the Arcachon chaplain holds his office by their appointment; and without the Society's aid there would, in all probability, be no Church-of-England service here at all. The same remark applies to Biarritz, and to many other of the health-resorts on the Continent of Europe. We had likewise a British and Foreign Bible Society meeting, at which we received most encouraging accounts from the London Secretary, the Rev. W. Morgan, who had just been preaching at Rome, Bordeaux, and other towns and cities on the Society's behalf.

The value of the Bible Society's labours cannot be over-estimated. Proofs of the want of the Bible abound on every side. One sad proof is (what I referred to in my last letter), the awful Sabbath profanation. "The stream of religion," says an old writer, "runs high or low in a country according as the banks of the Sabbath are kept up or let down." Here the banks are grievously let down. On every Sunday morning there is held a public market, the largest market of the week, for the sale of all kinds of eatables. On Sunday all the shops are open. I have not been able, after full inquiry, to find that a single shop is closed. On Sunday morning men go round distributing play-bills for the Sunday evening concert-room, or for the Sunday evening theatres. On Sunday, bakers are sending out their loaves or cakes. On Sunday, the laundress brings home to the people's houses their clean linen. It was arranged here the other day that the hounds should meet twice-a-week for hunting. One of the days selected for that purpose was Sunday. As I come from our Protestant service on Sunday, I meet men and women carrying bundles

of firewood, which they have been gathering in the forest.

Now why is all this? It all arises from their ignorance of God's Word. These people never hear God's commandments read in their churches; and they do not see them painted on the walls of their chancels. And in their houses at home they have no Bibles. These people too were never taught the Bible in their schools when they were young. Did they know the Bible, they might be appealed to on the score of their conduct being so opposed to the Bible. All we can now say to them is, "We are Protestants, and we tell you your lives are very wrong."

As to the Sunday market, had they Bibles, we might call their attention to Neh. xiii. 15, 16, where he complains of people treading wine-presses on the Sabbath-day, and of their lading asses, and bringing in sheaves, and wine, and grapes, and figs on the Sabbath-day; and where he also says how wrong it was of the men of Tyre to bring in their fish, and all manner of wares, and sell them on the Sabbath-day. As to the collecting of fire-wood, we might refer them to Num. xv. 36, where Moses asked God what was to be done to a man who was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath; and God Himself answered, "Let the man be put to death." "And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses." And as to people seeking profit by opening their shops on Sunday, we might point them to Exod. xvi. 27, where we read that some went out to gather manna on the Sabbath, and they found none;—to intimate to

us in these days that no profits ever arise from Sabbath profanation. And God was angry with them because of this sin.

Happily, in our own beloved country things are very different. In all our English day-schools, whether Church schools or Dissenting schools, whether British and Foreign Society schools, or School Board schools (with very few exceptions), God's own word is not only every day read, but is also every day explained, and that too by competent teachers. The result is, when the boys and girls become men and women, even if they are not converted, they know in their heads and memories what is wrong and what is right; not only as regards the Lord's-day, but also as respects the way of salvation. They know that the ten commandments are to be our rule of life. They also know that, through the corruption of our fallen nature, we all break those ten commandments, every one of them, continually, and that therefore we are every one of us sinners and need a Saviour. And when the Holy Spirit, in God's own time, opens their eyes and shows them their sinfulness, they at once, from the previous instruction they received as children, know that if they repent of their sins and believe in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, they will be pardoned and saved.

On this account I can hardly tell you how grieved I was when I heard the issue of the late School Board election at Stanhope. I did hope that the pious people of Weardale would have seen the real bearing of the question. It was not a political question. It was not a party question. It was a question of high principle. The question was whether all the children in our rate-

supported schools should be deprived for another three years of Bible instruction. The melancholy and cruel answer to that question is, "Yes; they shall." Mr. J. W. Pease, our M.P., very properly did not consider it a question of politics or of party. He, therefore, publicly complained of the present system, and urged the teaching as well as the reading of God's own word. How any pious father, (whether Churchman, Wesleyan, or Primitive Methodist), who values the Bible, can wilfully rob his own children of Bible instruction, I cannot understand. The result of the election proves, I think, what a low state of religious knowledge and feeling there must be in our valley, when the eternal interests of (perhaps) 1,000 children are thus sacrificed, even by their own parents. But, whatever a majority of votes just now may have decided, there can be, and there must be, no peace in Weardale till this foolish and wicked resolution, which forbids scriptural instruction, is blotted out from the minute-book of the Stanhope School Board. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. iii. 16). "More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold" (Ps. xix. 10). "Thou shalt diligently teach them unto thy children" (Deut. vi. 7). "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success" (Josh. i. 8).

C. CLAYTON.

P.S.—Notwithstanding the rain and the cold winds that have prevailed for the past three or four weeks, I think I may say that my cough is less troublesome

than it was. I have great hopes that the warmer weather of April and May will remove it altogether, by God's blessing.

Arcachon, S. W. France, March, 1877.

LETTER IV.

SINCE I last wrote to you, I have visited Bayonne, Biarritz, and Pau.

In making the journey to Bayonne, I had to travel by railway through the seventy miles of pine-forest of which I spoke. Here and there, as we went along, we saw a small space of ground cleared for vines, or for wheat, or for a railway-station; but we soon again saw nothing else but fir-trees, mixed with a few oaks, birch-trees, and cork-trees, as before.

One sight much struck me. It was this. Now and then I observed a patch of ground where all the trees were dead. This arose, I presume, from some peculiarity of the soil in those particular spots. It is thus, I thought, in our congregations in England. The same trees were planted in all that soil; but in some parts the trees have failed. So the same precious Gospel of a Saviour's love is preached to a whole congregation. In some hearts the tree is planted in a good soil; and it takes root and lives. In too many hearts, (in the greater number, our Lord says), the planting is in vain, and to no purpose. The soil is as barren and as unfruitful as if nothing had been planted at all. But what is to follow? In the barren parts of those forests men gather together the dry under-wood, and these worthless trees, and set them

on fire. Otherwise, by accident, they might catch fire of themselves, and destroy a great part of the living forest. So will it be done to all unprofitable hearers of God's Word. "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing : whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 7, 8.)

At the different railway-stations in England, we generally see large stores of coal laid up for sale, and horses and carts waiting to convey it away to the various customers. It is not so here. All along from Arcachon we saw vast accumulations, not of coal, but of fire-wood. This wood was cut up into all sizes and shapes ; and there were waggons there, drawn by oxen, or by mules, (mules are very much used, and are almost as high as horses), waiting for their loads.

As we approached Biarritz, (five miles beyond Bayonne), we came in sight of the lofty Pyrenees, their tops covered with pure white snow ; and a noble sight it was—mountains like burnished silver, raising their heads into the very clouds, with which they seemed to intertwine. But, as I gazed, I was often reminded of my own sad forgetfulness of heavenly things. As I was going along, rapt in admiration of so wonderful a display of the Creator's power, all in a moment I now and then found my view interrupted by a house coming between me and the mountain range. Here, I considered, is a lesson for me. That house is not more than forty feet in height ; and yet, from being so close to me, it prevents my looking at those moun-

tains which are 8000 or 9000 feet high. And how often do the low things of earth come in and block out of my view the high things of eternity! The Apostle Paul went through this same experience. He therefore exhorts us not to look so much at the things that are near and are temporal, but at those infinitely higher things which are farther off, and are eternal. (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

Besides the mountain scenery, Biarritz has much to interest, from its sea-side position. It was the favourite watering-place of the late Emperor Napoleon, whose residence there did much to raise the place to its present large dimensions. There is still there the palace Eugenie, with its extensive grounds; and the servant in charge of the empty building, with quiet humour, tells you that, though it is unoccupied now, it will one day be inhabited by the present Prince Imperial, the next Emperor of the French.

The coast at Biarritz is much broken by huge rocks, some of them of very fantastic shapes. And it is curious to watch the vast waves of the Bay of Biscay, when the wind is at all strong, foaming and dashing over these rocks, and threatening to wash both them and the land away, and suck them back into the depths of the ocean. At such a majestic sight, it is comforting to remember the sure word of God, Who has fixed the bounds of the sea, and Who has said to its roaring billows, as He has also said to the madness of the peoples, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (Job xxxviii. 11.)

These vast rocks, which are covered at high water, make navigation near the shore very dangerous.

Therefore, on the headland opposite the town, there is erected a lofty lighthouse, to warn mariners of their peril, just as Christ's ministers and people are told to warn their unconverted friends and neighbours of the danger they are in of making shipwreck of their souls. "Amongst whom," says the Apostle, "ye shine as lights"—as lighthouses—"in the world." (Philip. ii. 15.) The views from that lighthouse-hill, and other hills, are very striking, and especially at sunset ; and then the wonderful tints of the clouds and of the sea, and the lighting up of the summits both of the French and Spanish mountains, form a most gorgeous and enchanting spectacle.

One view of the sea was very peculiar. About two miles off from Biarritz the Bayonne river Adour empties itself into the ocean. The water of this river, consisting mainly of melted snow from the Pyrenees, was very yellow ; and you could see the yellow river quite distinct from the surrounding water for three or four miles after it had entered the sea. Now, here we have, I thought, an apt figure to represent how the unconverted sinner carries his corrupting and defiling influences into the world by which he is surrounded ; for which bad influences he will have to give a strict account at the last great day. The mud of the Adour does not stop at its mouth, but goes on and on, and pollutes the ocean. So the evil a man does, does not cease with his death ; but it goes on and on, like the evil example of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat ; and his bad example is influencing others for evil long after his dead body has been laid in the grave, and his soul fixed in misery in the eternal world.

At Biarritz appear the old French diligences.

There, too, many of the lower classes, either from choice or poverty, are seen working with naked feet. At a short distance from Biarritz, I visited what is called the silent nunnery. The many nuns there, of their own accord, have taken a vow of silence for life; and they foolishly imagine that, by so acting, they are doing God service. They are not allowed to speak to anybody, either at meals or at other times. They go about the buildings and grounds in a yellow flannel dress, with a huge black cross darned upon their backs. They get out of the way of visitors; but I saw several of them, some of them aged women. What a miserable existence! And what a wretched delusion to think they can please God by thus robbing themselves for life of one of His choicest gifts—the gift of speech! The ignorance so displayed is as bad as that of a degraded worshipper of idols, who cuts off a limb, or plucks out an eye, to propitiate his god. As I moved about the grounds, and saw on all sides the pictures and statues of the virgin Mary, I was grieved and indignant, and thought of St. Paul's feelings at Athens (Acts xvii. 16), when he passed by and saw the idols, and beheld the city "wholly given to idolatry." What a happy thing it is that in England we are not led by an ignorant priesthood, but by the sure directory of God's "infallible" word! And how simple God's remedy for man's guilt—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin!" God hath made Christ, Who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God "in Him!" After quitting this sickening sight, my friends and I drove through the pines again, till we came to the mouth of the Adour; and there it was

pleasing to watch the ships going out into the open sea at full sail, reminding us of the "abundant entrance" of the Christian believer into the glory of heaven. (2 Pet. i. 11.)

As we approached Bayonne, the views were very interesting. Outside the city, we saw some 120 of the French cavalry, watering their horses. We also saw the fortifications, and the wide and well-planted boulevards. We also went to the Roman Catholic cemetery, and saw the profusion of flowers which mourners, in anticipation of Easter-day, had placed over and around the tombs and graves of their deceased relatives. There is also at Bayonne a Protestant cemetery, in which lie interred many British officers and soldiers. The articles of peace, in 1815, had been signed, and the British army outside Bayonne knew the fact; but the French garrison inside, not knowing it, made a sortie upon the unsuspecting English, and slew a vast number, both of officers and of men. A suitable inscription marks the place of their burial. Bayonne is noted for its good chocolate. It is also known as having originated the *bayonet*, which was so called from the name of the town. In some battle the soldiers had spent all their ammunition, and how to use their guns they knew not. At length the idea struck them to take their side knives and stick them in their gun-stocks; and so armed they successfully charged the enemy, and from that time the bayonet came into general use as an efficient arm of the service.

On our return from Bayonne to Biarritz we drove along a noble road—the high-road from Paris to Madrid. The road was very straight for a long dis-

tance, and the vista of tall poplars, thirty feet apart from each other, on both sides of the road, with the lofty spire of the Bayonne Cathedral at the extreme end, was remarkably striking. Along the road, too, there kept coming into sight the villa of some French gentleman or Spanish grandee, with tastefully laid-out grounds.

At one of the railway stations, on my return, I heard a confused and loud noise like the quacking of many ducks. I went to see whence it proceeded, and observed a large sheet of water, and on it only two or three ducks. I soon saw that they were not making the noise; and I inquired what it all meant, when the railway official told me that this was a breeding-pond for frogs, and that they are sold for eating at Bordeaux and other towns at about twelve for a shilling—a delicacy which I suppose no one of us ever tasted, or has any wish to taste!

I find I have no space to tell you anything about Pau, which is about thirty miles east of Biarritz, except to say that I met there again our two Stanhope parishioners, Major and Mrs. Rippon, and that I was somewhat amused to see from my hotel-window a troop of goats marching gravely up to the hotel-door to be milked for the breakfast of the hotel visitors. As I expect to visit Pau again, I will write, if all is well, more about it for the June magazine.

Neither have I room to say anything more about Arcachon, except that it grows more and more lovely every day, by the bursting out of the universal vegetation. I have also no space fully to describe a ceremony which took place here last week—that of blessing the boats. The fishermen assembled at the

Cathedral, to be blessed first by seeing and hearing mass. After which they went in a procession to the sea-shore, where a temporary pulpit was erected, and where a sermon was preached to them; and then the boats were blessed. All this would have been very proper and interesting, had it not been for the false doctrine it involved. All around the Cathedral and the roads lofty banners were fluttering in the wind. On these banners the painted motto was—" *Heri solitudo, hodie vicus, cras civitas*"—to intimate the progress of Arcachon—"Yesterday a solitude, to-day a town, to-morrow a city." But what else was there on these flags? I examined many; and they all corresponded with each other. There was on them a picture; a fisherman, in his boat, in danger of being drowned. He was in the attitude of prayer. But to whom was he praying? Not to the risen and ascended Saviour; but to a dead woman, to the virgin Mary, who was represented in the sky above, with a baby in her arms. The day was wet, otherwise a gaudy statue (which I saw) of the virgin and child, as large as life, with a gilt crown on each head, would have formed part of the procession, to give the blessing due effect. Such is the debasing idolatry of the Romish apostasy!

But I must now conclude, and I do so with a suggestion and an inquiry.

(1) My *suggestion* is that you receive our new fellow-labourer, Mr. Edwards, in a spirit of earnest prayer. I believe, from what I have heard from trustworthy sources, that he will come to you in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," and that his great aim will be, by the Holy Spirit's blessing, to convert the unconverted amongst us, and to build up

those of you who are believers in our most holy faith. Help, then, him and Mrs. Edwards in all their efforts for your spiritual good. And let your earnest prayers be combined with mine, that many souls out of Stanhope may be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. We must offer the same prayer for Mr. and Mrs. Wagstaff, both as regards Stanhope and Rookhope.

(2) My *inquiry* is this. Are you saved? or are you not? "That question I cannot answer," you perhaps reply. But that question you ought to be able to answer. If you cannot answer it for yourself, some of your godly neighbours will be able to answer it for you. I will tell you what I mean. Some forty years ago the good Rev. C. Simeon, of Cambridge, at one of his evening parties, made this remark:—"I have heard it said that at sea a sailor sometimes mistakes a cloud for land, but that he never mistakes land for a cloud." He appealed for the truth of that remark to a naval gentleman who was present, and who said that so it was. Now, I was reminded of this the other day while I was gazing at the Pyrenees. At first I took some snowy mountains for clouds; but upon a second look I soon perceived my mistake, and saw distinctly that what I took for a cloud was indeed a mountain. I need not apply this. We sometimes deem real Christians to be unconverted formalists; but we soon see by their whole tone and character that we were wrong, and that our suspicions were misplaced. I hope sincerely, my dear friends, that we make no mistake as to you. You are, I hope, land, and not clouds—real believers, and not self-deceivers. Examine your own selves. Judge your own selves.

Are you saved? Are you in Christ? Or are you not? To be "in Christ" is to be saved. To be out of Christ is to be lost, and that for ever. How awful an end of this your short and fast-passing life! Some one has said, "When I get to heaven, there are three things I shall wonder at. I shall wonder, to miss many whom I verily expected to have seen there. I shall wonder, again, to see some there who I never thought would be there. But I shall wonder most of all, to find myself there." May that third wonder be your experience, and also mine! Of all deceptions, nothing can be more dreadful than self-deception. And yet, alas! there are many such self-deceivers in the world. What is hell? Hell has been awfully described as "truth seen too late."

C. CLAYTON.

Arcachon, S. W. France, April, 1877.

P.S.—My cough has not yet left me; but I hope I am better and stronger than I was. I am sorry not to be in London this year, as usual, attending the anniversary meetings of our religious societies. The annual sermon in behalf of our beloved Church Missionary Society is to be preached by our own excellent Diocesan, the Bishop of Durham, whose son is one of the Society's devoted missionaries in India.

LETTER V.

TWENTY-EIGHT years ago, I was favoured at Cambridge with a visit from an excellent French Protestant pastor, the Rev. J. Bost, of La Force, Dordogne. He

knew then but little English, but he soon was compelled to speak it tolerably well, as he was travelling about England to obtain support for a benevolent institution, which he was just beginning to establish. He apologized for his broken language, by saying he saw what sad mistakes English clergymen sometimes made, when they attempted to speak or preach in French. But with his natural politeness, he said he found he made equally serious mistakes himself, whenever he attempted to speak or preach in English. He gave an example. He was one day in Scotland, and admiring the scenery, when his companion pointed out to him a distant barren mountain. "Barren," he asked, "What is barren?" "Naked," he was told, "Nothing on it." A short time after, he was called upon to address the General Assembly, the good and learned Dr. Chalmers being Moderator that year, and occupying the chair. M. Bost began his speech with great trepidation, and said he regretted that so young a man should be asked to speak before so vast an audience, and in the presence of so many "grey and barren heads." He at once perceived the whole assembly to be convulsed with laughter; and he then learned the blunder he had committed. The newspapers the next day reported the proceedings, and drily observed that the foreigner had told the naked truth; for that, while there were in that assembly some few heads that were bald, there were certainly far more there that were "barren."

Hearing that I was at Arcachon, M. Bost the other day sent me an urgent request that I would go over and pay him a visit. I was able to avail myself of his kind invitation, and was deeply interested in all I

heard and saw. Upon meeting him, I inquired if his excellent father was still living. He informed me that he had lately died, in his eighty-fourth year, after having just kept with his wife the sixtieth anniversary of their wedding. His end was perfect peace. One day M. Bost's little boy said, "Grandfather, dinner is ready. Come to dinner," when he, almost prophetically, answered, "Dinner! To-morrow I shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And so it was; for the very next day his pardoned and justified spirit was taken by the angels to Abraham's bosom. He had himself enjoyed the great privilege of preaching Christ for many years as a French Protestant pastor; and it was his high satisfaction on his death-bed to have at his side six sons, all of them Protestant pastors.

When M. Bost came to Cambridge in 1849, he had only one inmate in his infant institution. He has now nearly four hundred. In 1849, his resources were eighteen francs—fifteen shillings. His annual income is now £8,000; and no less a sum than £120,000 has passed through his hands since his work began. At first his chief supporters were in England; but now two-thirds of the subscriptions come from France and Switzerland. As most of his inmates are either French or Swiss, the people of France and Switzerland see the benefit they receive, and therefore feel it their duty to give all the help they can. As one proof of this, I may mention that within the last nine months two ladies in the neighbouring town of Bergerac have contributed no less than £4,000.

Into this institution, consisting of seven separate blocks of buildings, M. Bost has gathered orphans—

boys and girls,—men and women, afflicted with epileptic fits—imbeciles—widows in great distress—aged servants without homes and without resources—worn-out governesses—and the halt, the deaf, the dumb, and the blind. His aim is to do these outcasts not only bodily but also spiritual good. I attended his church on the Sunday. It is placed in the midst of his people, and will seat seven hundred worshippers. On the outside of the tower, over the entrance porch, there is a large marble slab, representing an open Bible, and on its pages appears the motto, “Thy word is truth,”—a most useful suggestion to the surrounding Roman Catholics, to whom their priests make the Bible a closed and sealed book. Over the pulpit is another marble slab, representing also an open Bible, and on it there is the inscription, “We preach Christ crucified.” Their mode of worship was like that of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. They sat while they sang; and stood when they were engaged in prayer. The singing was not accompanied by any musical instrument, but was very sweet and simple; and the hearers, old and young, listened with great apparent attention to a sermon (on 1 Cor. x. 31), which was three-quarters of an hour long.

In the afternoon I visited, with M. Bost, the directress of one of the institutions, who was dying of consumption. She was most calm and peaceful, relying on the finished work of the Saviour; and it was very touching to see the elder girls come, and at her request sing, in the verandah outside her room, some hymns on the subject of the Christian believer entering heaven. After this I addressed his Bible-class, consisting of about two hundred persons, old and young;

and they seemed deeply interested, while M. Bost interpreted both what I said about Christ and salvation ; and also what I related as to God's work now going on in our own beloved and Protestant land.

On the following day he took me over the various departments ; and I was taught, I hope, a lesson of thankfulness to God for my own many mercies, both temporal and spiritual. Who, I asked myself, has made me to differ from these poor afflicted people ? Why have I sight, while some here are blind ? Why have I the power of speech, and the privilege of hearing, while so many here are both dumb and deaf ? Why, too, have I my senses continued, while I see so many here either insane or imbecile ? One poor man, deaf and dumb, much struck me. With his limbs contorted, he began, as soon as he saw me, to point first to his side, and then to his hands and feet, and he then placed both his hands on the top of his head. All this he did to tell me that Jesus had been wounded in his side, and hands and feet, and that he wore a crown of thorns, while suffering for our sins ; and he then lifted up his arms towards heaven, to show me that Jesus was above, preparing a place for him and for all His people. A Spanish girl died there lately. She, like the deaf and dumb imbecile, had but little intellect ; but she had learnt enough to put her whole trust in the Saviour ; and with a firm faith in His atoning blood she died. How will that deaf and dumb man, and that half imbecile girl rise up in the last day and condemn some of you, our Stanhope people, who have your limbs and senses perfect, but who are most inexcusably neglecting that gracious Redeemer who came to save you as well as them !

La Force is thirty-five miles to the east of Bordeaux. In my journey through, I was shown, at Bordeaux, a sight which astonished me, and which would have equally astonished you. Bordeaux, as I mentioned before, is the centre of the vine district of S.W. France. It is, therefore, the head-quarters for the sale of wines. I went down into one of the wine cellars. It was like going down into one of our coal mines. We had each to carry in our hands a lighted candle; and, as we groped our way along the subterranean passages, nothing met our eyes but streets of casks; some of these casks holding forty-six gallons; and some of them being worth £80 each. In that one cellar alone they can stow away six thousand casks, representing £300,000, or £400,000 worth of wine.

Bordeaux is a place we English ought to be interested in, as it belonged to England from 1152 to 1453. It is the second seaport in France. Its river, the Gironde, is seven hundred and twenty yards broad, about the width of the Thames in London. It was here Gambetta, in 1870, held the French Parliament, when it was obliged to leave Tours at the approach of the German armies. It is full of business of all kinds. On the quay, which is three miles long, I observed not only markets for hay, and for straw, and for other commodities, but also, what appeared singular, a market for stone. The stone is brought by ships from distant quarries, and is then deposited on the quay, and the masons and builders come and select what will suit best their respective purposes. I visited there the English Protestant church, the chaplain of which is an old Cambridge friend of mine, Mr. Frossard. I also visited the French Protestant church, and the Pro-

testant hospital. In that hospital, among other patients, I found an old sailor from Cornwall; and I was glad to see that he was improving his time by reading one of the valuable publications of our London Religious Tract Society. Opposite Mr. Frossard's house is the Roman Catholic Church of St. Joseph, husband to the virgin Mary. On the top of the church outside, there is engraven on the stone walls in large letters, "*Deus constituit Joseph quasi patrem regis et dominum universæ domus ejus.*" ("God appointed Joseph father as it were of the king, and lord of his universal church.") Where do we read of any such appointment being made by God? Not surely in "God's" word. In the garden adjoining the church is a monastery, and I saw the monks with their cowls over their shoulders walking up and down the garden. In that garden is a lofty statue of the virgin Mary; and these monks at certain hours come and perform their devotions on their knees around this statue. What authority again have they for this? Not surely God's word, which says (Exod. xx. 5), "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them." But how can we expect things to be different, when both priests and people alike are so ignorant of the Scriptures? To the Roman Catholic population of France the Bible is almost an unknown book. I entered yesterday one of their day-schools for a hundred and sixty girls, taught by nuns. I saw there many statues and pictures of Mary, but I could not see a single copy of God's Word. How privileged are our boys and girls in England, who, in all our schools (with a very few unhappy exceptions), have God's own Word read and explained every day!

In Bordeaux there is a large public garden, and also an extensive museum. In the museum I saw a great variety of objects. Here are bones of vast creatures, which are supposed no longer to exist on earth. Here, too, stuffed and looking as fierce as if they were still alive, are to be seen all kinds of *beasts*—lions, tigers, panthers, elephants, baboons, monkeys, ourangs. Here, too, are stuffed specimens of *birds*—pelicans, ostriches, eagles, hawks, finches, cockatoos, partridges, pheasants, and humming-birds. Of *fishes*, there are whales, sword-fishes, turtles, and porpoises. Of *reptiles*—boa-constrictors, pythons, cobras, snakes, and asps. *Butterflies* of all hues, and other insects. *Shells* of every shape, skeletons of men, and mummies from Egypt. In fact, the selection was so large, that each separate room would require a whole day to examine it thoroughly. I could not but inwardly say, as I looked at this profusion of specimens, “How small a portion know we of God’s creation!” “Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty!” “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” To describe, indeed, adequately God’s works, there is need of the pen of Solomon, who was “wiser than all men,” and who in his day wrote treatises upon natural history, for “he spoke of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes.” (1 Kings iv. 33.)

I also visited the picture-gallery at Bordeaux; but in that I stayed a very short time, as I could hardly look in any direction without being distressed and disgusted by seeing on the walls paintings of females

in a state of perfect nudity. I am aware that artists and others call it prudery to object to such pictures, and are always ready to quote the proverb, "Evil be to him that evil thinks." But such people forget the fallen and corrupt nature of man, and that more or less all men at such sights do "think evil." It was not till after the fall that men required clothing, and it is against God's own law when clothing is dispensed with. In our own country, too, this kind of exhibition extensively prevails; and yet we see some misguided people urging Parliament to throw open picture-galleries on Sunday, as a means of refining and elevating, as they say, the tastes of the people. Whereas such exhibitions must tend to corrupt the sight-seers, and especially so the young of both sexes. Concerning the advocacy of such Sabbath desecration, we may well pray, "The Lord turn the counsel of these Abithophels into foolishness!" (2 Sam. xv. 31.)

The country east of Bordeaux is very picturesque. The hills often rise as high as those in Weardale. The vine is cultivated up to their very summits; and there are towns, villas, and houses studding the whole district. It is like some of the most beautiful parts of Kent, where our English hop-gardens very much resemble these French vineyards. Last January the vines looked like so many dead and dry stumps; but now they are sending forth their green tendrils in luxuriance in every direction.

But grapes, like some of our produce in England, are a very uncertain crop; and one single night's frost in spring will lay a whole vineyard waste, and make it profitless for the entire year. A sad loss to the

proprietor ! But, alas ! there are other vineyards, we should remember, which are equally profitless to the owner. I refer to the vineyard of our souls. Of many of our souls the great Proprietor says, "These three years"—not one year only—"these three years I have come seeking fruit, and find none. I have given you my Word, my Sabbaths, my ministers, and, above all, my Son, and the free offer of my Spirit. What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it ? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ?" (Isa. v. 4.) But the great Proprietor will not be trifled with. "I am the true Vine," says Christ, "and my Father is the Husbandman ; every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 1, 2, 6.) The word "burned" contains an awful meaning. That heavenly-minded Scotch minister, the Rev. Robert McCheyne, once took shelter during rain in a blacksmith's forge. After the usual salutations, he solemnly said to the blacksmith, "What does that fire remind you of ?" The man knew what he meant ; and that single question, by the power of God's Spirit, became the means of his conversion. He thought of the fire of hell, and repented and believed, and so escaped from the wrath to come. It is our blessed Lord's own warning, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." From that fire we wish, my dear friends, by God's help, to save you. A few Sundays ago at Arcachon, when we came out from the afternoon service, we found the

whole place in a commotion, as one of the *chalêts* was on fire. It was pleasing to observe the readiness with which the crowds handed the pails of water and assisted at the engines, and carried the furniture and goods to a place of safety, and gave themselves no rest till the fire was extinguished. As I observed all this, I could not but feel how cheering it would be if we could have the same zeal shown by Christians to save from fire—not merely the houses, but also the souls of their fellow-men. Oh! what are ten thousand houses compared to one soul? It is good to save a house, but surely it is infinitely more important to save a soul. In the case of the house, the fire must soon burn itself out; but the fire in hell is “fire unquenchable.” (Matt. iii. 12.) Shall your souls, my dear friends, go to that fire? They will, if you continue dead branches of the living vine. By your baptism, you are nominally branches; but I fear a large number of you are only dead branches, and that your end will be the fire—the fire that is never quenched.

This will be the end of all dead professors. The axe is even now upraised to cut down every dead branch, because it bringeth not forth good fruit. And you cannot produce good fruit till you are quickened by Christ. Christ is the life; and, therefore, union with Christ alone can make alive the dead. Enoch walked with God; but a dead soul cannot walk. A lifeless branch must be a fruitless branch. And you must each be dead, till you derive sap from Christ by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Seek then, by prayer, for this gift—this unspeakable gift of the Holy Spirit, and your souls shall live, and bring forth “much fruit” (John xv. 5) on earth, and then flourish for ever in

heaven. "From Me," says Christ, "is thy fruit found." (Hos. xiv. 8.)

C. CLAYTON.

P.S.—My next letter, I expect, will be written to you from Paris, on my way home to England. I long to return; and hope, in God's good providence, to come back to you in much better health, and also to find that God's blessing has abundantly rested upon the parish during my long but enforced absence.

Biarritz, S.W. France, May, 1877.

LETTER VI.

At the end of May, the north and north-west winds so irritated my throat and chest, that we thought it prudent to leave Biarritz for the more quiet air of Pau. At Biarritz there were many sights which interested us; but, as I mentioned before, the sight that most struck us was, on fine evenings, the setting of the sun. On one evening in particular, the scene was remarkable. It had been raining all the previous day; but just at the time of sunset the clouds separated, and formed, as it were, a majestic canopy over the sun's disc; and then, with the richest colours in the sky above, and on the water and land beneath, the sun full-orbed gradually sunk and disappeared in the opposite sea, the red sky giving us the promise of a fine to-morrow. As I looked on the glorious scene before me, I could but recal those simple yet beautiful lines of good Dr. Watts, which I doubt not many of your children have often repeated in your hearing:—

"How fine has the day been, how bright was the sun,
How lovely and joyful the course that he run,
Though he rose in a mist when his race he begun,
And there follow'd some droppings of rain!
But now the fair traveller's come to the west,
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best;
He paints the sky gay as he sinks into rest,
And foretels a bright rising again.

"Just such is the Christian. His course he begins,
Like the sun in a mist, when he mourns for his sins,
And melts into tears. Then he breaks out and shines,
And travels his heav'nly way;
But when he comes nearer to finish his race,
Like a fine setting sun he looks richer in grace,
And gives a sure hope, at the end of his days,
Of rising in brighter array."

Our journey from Biarritz to Pau was very pleasant. We came, first of all, by a private carriage to Bayonne; and, while I was there, I was forcibly reminded, by what I heard and saw, of my old parish of Chatham in Kent. I there heard the well-known bugle summoning the soldiers to their various posts of duty. I heard also the measured tramp of the pickets going their rounds to relieve their brethren on guard. I saw, too, the ships and steamers on the wide river, and likewise the fortifications all round the town, as well as the activities of trade and commerce. All this I was wont to hear and see at Chatham in 1837. What a passing scene, I thought, is life! After the interval of forty years, how very few of the busy people I then saw in Chatham now survive! And forty years hence a new generation will be moving in the streets both of Bayonne and of Stanhope; and certainly I, and very likely most of you, will then be gone into the world of

spirits. How true it is that man is "as a shadow that departeth!" In heaven, happily, there is no departing. "Into that happy world," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "no enemy enters, and from it no friend departs." All there is fixed and abiding. We shall be as pillars in the temple of our God; and we shall "no more go out."

From Bayonne to Pau the railway runs through a magnificent country, covered with vines, and all kinds of field products. As we came along we saw one particular bridge over which Wellington passed with his army into Spain, during the Peninsular war. On our approaching Pau, the Pyrenees came more and more into sight; but, as the sky was somewhat hazy, we could not see them with distinctness. One fine day, however, after our arrival, we had a striking view. We drove three miles up a neighbouring hill, thirteen hundred feet above the sea level; and thence we beheld Pau, with its churches, barracks, squares, and houses at our feet on the north-east, while on the south we saw the Pyrenees stretching before us in a range of one hundred and seventy miles in length. Some of the mountains (the nearest of them fifteen or twenty miles off) had their tops still covered with snow; and it was interesting to watch the clouds, some passing over the mountains, and others curling about their sides beneath—clouds and snow sometimes so mixed that you could hardly say which was which.

In that excursion we were much struck with the fertility of the soil, as every inch of ground up to the highest point seemed to be cultivated, and was producing either vines, or fruit, or corn, or grass. We could not help noticing, too, the grand old trees, in-

variably planted to the west of every lofty habitation, to protect it against the Atlantic gales.

Pau is a large and important town. It was the capital of Navarre, and has now a population of more than thirty thousand inhabitants. It is noted as being the birthplace of Henry IV., who was born in 1553. Here, too, is Henry IV.'s chateau, which, it is supposed, was built originally at the early date of 982 A.D. This chateau is now unoccupied, but is open to the inspection of visitors. We went over its spacious apartments, and saw the room in which that king was born, and the cradle, the huge shell of a tortoise, in which he was rocked. The figured tapestry on the walls is three or four hundred years old, but the colours appear as bright and as fresh as if it was put up only yesterday. This chateau or castle has been the residence of various important personages and of crowned heads since it ceased to be the palace of Henry IV. In Pau the shops are good, and the streets are well paved, and lighted, and watered. There is, too, an extensive park, open to the public, with a splendid view of the Pyrenees in front. The trees there and in other parts of the town are a great relief to the inhabitants, in affording them shelter from the hot rays of the sun. Seats are provided in all directions at the public expense. In Pau there are three places of worship in connection with the Church of England. There is, likewise, a Presbyterian church, belonging to the Free Church of Scotland. There are also several Roman Catholic churches, two of them as large as many of our English cathedrals.

Last Sunday, all Pau was in a state of great excitement, as it was the Pope's Jubilee—the celebration of

the fiftieth year of his Episcopate. His Popedom, too, of thirty years has been one of the longest on record. It is said that he has been longer Pope than was the Apostle Peter, who, it is asserted, was Pope of Rome for twenty-five years, whereas there is no proof that Peter was ever in Rome at all!! On Sunday, therefore, in honour of the Pope, the Pope's flags (yellow and white) were suspended from the church steeples; and at eleven o'clock there was the annual procession of the host through all the principal streets. These streets were strewn over with rushes and long grass, to prevent the dust from rising; and all the shop-fronts were covered with white sheets, and on these sheets were pinned either roses or garlands of flowers. The order of the procession was as follows:—First came a large number of boys, each carrying a little banner; and on the banner was the representation either of Christ, or of the virgin Mary, or of some saint. Then, with similar banners, came girls in white. Next followed young women in white muslin, and the older women with red ribbons over their breasts and shoulders. Then came nuns, with their black dresses and large white caps; and then men and boys, swinging to and fro their censers full of burning incense; and mixed with them and after them were priests in their robes. Last of all came their idol—a piece of bread, supposed to be turned into God, and called the "*Bon Dieu*" ("the good God"), one of the large flags plainly teaching this monstrous doctrine of what is called "the real presence." This bread-god was covered with a large satin canopy, of the colour of gold, and was borne aloft, the people doing it reverence as it passed.

I ought to have added that in the procession, to represent John the Baptist, there was a boy, dressed up in a sheep's skin, and leading a lamb washed beautifully clean. There was also in the procession a military band, and likewise a regiment of soldiers; and they, with their bayonets uplifted, and with their military caps on their heads, followed with the crowd into St. Martin's church, where the rest of the superstitious ceremonies were gone through. Alas! what a burlesque is all this of the simple Christianity of the New Testament! And how truly does our Scriptural and Protestant Church of England, in her thirty-first Article, call these Romish doctrines "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." And well, in her twenty-eighth Article, does she warn us that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not to be "reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped," as was now being done at Pau.

At night the shops and houses were all illuminated, and the churches also. On one of the church spires I observed the variegated lights changing and being changed up to eleven o'clock; and, as a spectacle, all was beautiful and successfully performed, and gave great pleasure, I doubt not, to the vast crowds of sight-seers, by whom the streets were thronged. But how little, I thought, does all this childish and worldly display accord with the calm and hallowed feelings which the evening of the Christian Sabbath ought ever to inspire!

But while there is much to pain and distress us in the false doctrines and superstitious practices of the Roman Catholics, there are some things which it would be well for us English Protestants to imitate.

For example, some foolish persons in England have a great aversion to galleries in churches. But why? Why are churches built? Are they merely to be looked at? Or to be used? If there is not sufficient room for the people in a church, by all means, if it can be done, let galleries be erected, to provide the required accommodation. In almost all Roman Catholic churches you see one or more galleries. And in one French Roman Catholic church, I saw *two* galleries, and in another *three* galleries, running one above the other, all round three sides of the building; and with regard to one of those churches, I was told that the galleries and the floor are all crowded at the Sunday's services.

Another lesson we English may learn from the Roman Catholics. I refer to the ease and dignity with which their preachers stand up in their pulpits, and, without any manuscript or book before them, speak to and plead with their congregations. I have often thought that, if the pure Gospel of Christ were delivered, the specimens I saw would be the very perfection of pulpit ministration, and might advantageously be imitated by our English clergy, especially in our country parishes.

In another respect Popery is wise, wise as a serpent, in its generation. Popery, I have observed, is very careful to adapt itself to its surroundings. Things are done and taught by it in Roman Catholic France which would not be done and taught in Protestant England. And so also things are done and taught in French villages which would not be done and taught in French towns, and particularly in a town like Pau, where there are to be found 600 French

Protestants, and where the English are 1,000 or 1,500 in number.

Thus in Pau you see the priests receiving females into their demoralizing confessional boxes; you see the idolatry of the mass; you see the priests in gorgeous vestments, with their backs towards the people, go through their various genuflexions and manipulations; you see them then turn round and exhibit and lift up the consecrated wafer; and you see the people at the tinkling of a bell bowing down their heads in adoration, believing that the bread just prayed over has been actually turned into the real body of Christ. In Pau, too, you see acknowledged the unscriptural doctrine of the invocation of saints, as is shown by the inscriptions all round you, "*O sancta Maria, ora pro nobis,*" "*O sancte Jacobe, ora pro nobis,*" "*O sancte Martine, ora pro nobis,*" "*O St. Mary, O St. James, O St. Martin, pray for us.*"

But in Pau you will not find the more degraded and more out-spoken forms of error, which are found in out-of-the-way places, and which are not likely in those out-of-the-way places to be exposed by the contrast of Protestant and Scriptural truth. I will explain what I mean. One day while we were at Biarritz, we made an excursion into Spain, and visited two Spanish towns, Irun and Fontarabia. And what did we there see? At Irun, we found a fine and large old church, which bore marks of the late Carlist war, its massive stone walls having been pierced and indented by cannon-balls. When we entered the church, it was like descending into a huge and dark cave. There were two or three small candles burning; but all the windows were blocked up with blinds,

as there had just been a mass for the soul of some important deceased person. When the blinds were drawn aside, we inspected the church; and we saw what much shocked us. In addition to the usual statues of the virgin and other saints, and in addition to the common sight of some poor and aged women kneeling before these images, and going through their *Ave Marias* on their beads, we saw, when a curtain was pulled back, an elegantly-dressed model of the virgin Mary, the size of life; and beneath, also previously hid by a curtain, there appeared a ghastly figure of a naked, life-size Christ, lying in a tomb, with hands and feet and head wounded. And close beside it was a horrible painting, fifteen feet in height, representing souls in purgatory. At the bottom of the picture were flames; and amid those curling flames were men, women, and children, with the utmost sorrow and agony depicted on their countenances. Just above these tormented creatures, and above the fires, was seated the virgin Mary, who is pretended to have the power to grant the deliverance prayed for; and above the virgin, at the top of the picture, was sitting Christ as a grown man; and God the Father was there, as an older man; and there was between Christ and the Father a dove to represent God the Holy Ghost. You will bear in mind that these souls, said to be in purgatory, are the souls of good people, who, the priests say, are to go to heaven at last, but who require to be purified first. Happily you and I know, from God's own Word, that there is no such place as purgatory, and that the Christian believer, washed in Christ's blood, and robed in Christ's righteousness, as soon as he is absent from the

body, is instantly present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.) If any person needed purifying after death, we should have said the thief on the cross did ; and yet, even of him our blessed Redeemer declared, "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*" (Luke xxiii. 43.)

In the church of Fontarabia there were the same sickening sights, but to a larger extent. There we saw many of these elegantly dressed virgins, and dead Christs, when the curtains at the various altars were drawn aside. And in the adjoining chapter-room, there stood, shut up in a closet, another magnificently dressed figure of the virgin, with four iron rings attached, on which rings, supported by staves, this idol is carried, we were told by the verger, through the streets in procession, on the various fête days.

The poverty-stricken appearance of the people in that part of Spain was very painful. We saw there men and women, many of them, working in the fields without either shoes or stockings. Ragged and shoeless boys followed us begging. And the houses, once occupied by nobles, now turned into stables, showed us plainly that Popery best flourishes in the country it most ruins. As one proof of the present darkness of Spain, the special day for the cruel and brutalizing exhibition of bull-fights is Sunday ! Both on Easter-day and on Whitsunday, there were excursion-trains from Biarritz in France, to St. Sebastian in Spain, for one of these horrid sights. There were three bulls to be tortured, as well as the horses, and it may be the riders also. And many persons, I am sorry to say, went. Such is Popery ! And such its breach of the fourth and other commandments of the Most High God, our Maker !

I am afraid of wearying you with these details ; but I think it desirable that as you have often read in Foxe's book of martyrs and other Protestant publications, what Popery was in England three hundred years ago, you may see, through my eyes, what Popery now is in this nineteenth century in these neighbouring countries of France and Spain, and that you may understand what England would again become, if, in judgment upon us for our past national neglect of our spiritual privileges, God should remove our candlestick, and leave us to our own hearts' devices. (Rev. ii. 5.)

I cannot tell you how refreshing it was, after witnessing the ceremony, and tinsel, and hubbub on the Pope's Jubilee Sunday, to go and join in the simple and scriptural prayers of our Church, and to listen to an edifying sermon, preached by the chaplain, Rev. W. Tait, formerly of Rugby, on Rom. v. 1, " We have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." After some general remarks, Mr. Tait, in the most striking manner, showed that (1) As God's creatures, (2) As His sinful creatures, and (3) As His suffering creatures, we must derive all our comforts in time, and all our hopes for eternity, from the finished work of the Lord Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man. May such a setting forth of Christ be ever found in our pulpits in England, as well as in these our English chapels abroad !

C. CLAYTON.

Pau, S.W. France, June, 1877.

P.S.—As I do not leave this place for Paris till next week, I am obliged to defer all I have to say concerning Paris and other places till my next letter.

LETTER VII.

IN this, my last letter, I go on to tell you, as before, what I have seen and heard. In the July number of the magazine, I described what is going on at Pau. One day, my sisters-in-law and I made an excursion eastward from Pau, to Betharran and Lourdes. As we went by the railway, we were deeply interested with the magnificence of the scenery. On each side were vineyards and well-cultivated fields. In many of them the haymakers were busily occupied, while on the south side there kept coming into sight the successive tops of the range of the lofty Pyrenees. The river, too, filled up to the brim with milk-coloured water, was ever crossing our path, as it rolled on in its rapid current from the snow-mountains down towards the sea.

At *Betharran*, we visited the parish church, which is very old, and is filled with large and antiquated paintings, and with statues of the virgin Mary and of Christ. On our entering, we found several persons at their devotions before the various images. At one corner we saw two poor women kneeling before an ugly stone image of a naked Christ, painted flesh colour, the size of life. And, after they had finished their prayers, we saw them superstitiously draw near and kiss the stone before which they had been kneeling. All round the church were the usual "stations of the cross," as they are called. At these stations, about fourteen in number, are put up paintings representing different scenes of our Lord's passion. In addition to these stations inside, there were fourteen

stations on the outside, consisting of little Gothic chapels, to which the people go, and say certain prayers before each of them. The day we were there several Canadian pilgrims had arrived at Betharran from Lourdes ; and we were much struck with one young man who was bareheaded, and who, with his book of prayers in his hand, was going from chapel to chapel, kneeling down in front to pay his prescribed devotions. In Betharran is a college, taught by Roman Catholic priests ; and there four hundred young lads are being trained for the priesthood. We overheard them practising their chants and hymns ; and the sound, as it reached us on the heights above, was most harmonious and pleasing.

Two stations beyond Betharran is *Lourdes* ; and there the superstition and idolatry we saw we should hardly have believed, had we not seen it with our own eyes. It is pretended that in 1858 the virgin Mary appeared on a rock at Lourdes to some young persons ; and that, among other directions, she told them that a church must be built on that spot ; and that the church, when erected, was to be consecrated by a great procession of priests and people ; that she would herself be present in the procession ; and that the doctrine of her being born without sin, called her "immaculate conception," should be everywhere diligently preached. Over this rock, accordingly, a large and very lofty church has arisen ; and it is so ornamented inside with beautiful banners and other costly gifts, presented by the different dioceses, and cities, and towns in France, that it looks more like a vast royal banqueting-hall than a place for Christian worship. We went into the grotto or cave beneath ; and there we

saw a life-size image of the virgin Mary, suspended by wire-work over the rock, with the inscription "Immaculate Conception," like a glory, surrounding her head. In the cave were candles burning in her honour, presented by devotees ; and in and around the cave were men, women, and children on their knees before the image, many of whom we saw kiss the floor on which they had knelt.

As we went towards the place, we were pestered by women and girls showing us candles for sale, to be offered in the cave ; and all along the approaches there were shops and booths, like one of our country fairs, filled with images of the virgin, of all colours and sizes, reminding us of what must have been the appearance of Ephesus of old, where the craftsmen of Demetrius were so busy in making and selling silver shrines for the great goddess Diana, and also reminding us of the poor Chinese, who in one of their towns have a street called "godmakers'-street," from the occupation of those who have their shops in it. In Pau, (and in other towns also, I doubt not), you may see those same images, of all sizes and sorts, exposed for sale in the shop-windows. We therefore need not be surprised that a large proportion of the French people disbelieve a religion which sanctions such gross superstition and idolatry ; and, as they have no one to teach them what real Christianity is, it is no marvel that they to a great extent either have no religion at all, or are avowed infidels.

In June, the heat in *Pau* became so intense that we could hardly leave the house ; and the only way in which we could keep ourselves at all cool was by closing both the windows and shutters, thus excluding

both the heated air and the light. We were therefore glad to leave Pau, and take our journey to the north of France. In so doing, we passed through several large and important towns, such as Dax, Morceaux, and Bordeaux, and came the first night to Angoulême, which is a cathedral city, eighty-three miles north of Bordeaux, with a population of 22,000 souls. Here, late at night, we were visited with a violent thunder-storm, with torrents of rain, and most vivid lightning.

The next day we passed through the cathedral towns of Orleans and Tours, and arrived at another cathedral town named Blois, which has a population of 22,300 souls. There we slept. Blois is an old and picturesque city, 113 miles south of Paris, with a large castle or chateau on a rock overhanging the houses, and with an elegant stone bridge, of eleven arches, spanning the river Loire. We visited the cathedral, and the fine church of St. Nicholas. Blois has, too, an excellent aqueduct, ascribed to the Romans, cut in the rock, and conveying water to the fountains of the place. This city was occupied by the German army in the war of 1870.

The next day we found ourselves in *Paris*, the metropolis of France. I ought here to mention that in France travellers have no trouble or anxiety about their luggage. When you take at the station your ticket for the journey, you take at the same time a ticket for your luggage; and on your arrival at the end of your journey, all you have to do is to present your luggage-ticket, and the luggage is at once brought forth. On our arrival, I received a visit from the Rev. Dr. Forbes, the excellent chaplain of the

Church in Rue d'Aguesseau ; and he took me that night to one of the many meetings which are being held weekly by Mr. McAll for preaching the Gospel to the French. On this occasion, three addresses in French were delivered, and some French hymns sung. One of the hymns was a translation of "Just as I am, without one plea."

On the following day, we visited a striking panorama in Champs Elysées. In this panorama, which occupies the entire dome of a large building, there is a painting of Paris as besieged by the Germans in 1870. The work occupied twenty artists for twelve months ; and it is a remarkable production, as you get from it not only a clear idea of Paris itself, but also a terrible idea of the horrors of war. So well is the painting done, that in some parts real cannons, and real exploded shells were mixed up with the painted ones, and you could not say which were real and which were not so.

On the Sunday we attended Dr. Forbes' Church, and were glad to see so large a congregation, and so many communicants. In the full Paris season, the church had been so crowded that many had to go away, not being able to find seats. In the afternoon, I went to the church of M. Bersier, a pastor of the French Protestant Church, and was much interested with his new liturgy, and with the singing of the people. In the evening, I am sorry to say, we heard the sound of fireworks being let off in some of the pleasure-gardens ; and we also saw a large balloon with people in it sailing over our house. The Lord's-day is the great day for amusements in Paris, as well as in the south of France, as I formerly mentioned. I

hope we may never see what, ninety years ago, the poet Cowper feared as to England :—

“ O Italy ! Thy Sabbaths will be soon
Our Sabbaths, c'osed with mummery and buffoon.
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship, and the mountebank between.”

During the following week, I was expecting to see many of the sights of Paris, and to describe them to you. But how true is the proverb, “ Man proposes, but God disposes ! ” The next ten days I was very ill, and confined almost entirely to my bed. On my recovery, however, I took two drives, to get the air ; and then I saw the beautiful park *Bois de Boulogne*, and the noble “ arch of triumph,” with thirteen broad roads meeting at its base. We also were proposing one day to pay a visit to the *Hotel des Invalides*, under the large gilded dome of which the remains of Napoleon I. were deposited, after they were brought from St. Helena. On that day, however, we found the building was closed. We also saw the cathedral *Notre Dame*, the gilded and gaudy Greek Church, and the Tuileries, formerly the residence of the sovereigns of France, but now gutted and in ruins, having been set on fire by the Commune in May, 1871. The houses in the principal thoroughfares are very large and well-built, chiefly of stone ; and some of them are seven or eight stories in height. The roads, too, are well kept, plentifully watered, and adorned with a row of trees on each side.

But amidst all this outward splendour, there is felt great uneasiness. The people, having no Bible principles to guide them, are ever dissatisfied with the

existing state of things, and are always looking for some fresh change. All the more thoughtful inhabitants feel, therefore, that they are living, as it were, over a volcano, which may burst at any moment, and involve everything in anarchy and ruin. They have not forgotten the dreadful reign of terror six years ago. As we came to the railway station, the day we left, Dr. Forbes kindly accompanied us; and, as I was remarking upon the noble appearance of the street through which we were at that moment driving, Dr. Forbes replied, "Yes, on this very spot, I saw, in 1871, an excited mob leading off two women to be shot; and, as they were passing, a woman rushed out of one of those houses, and exclaimed, 'Keep them here till I get some scalding water to pour on them.'" Such fiends did the people then become! Mrs. Forbes herself was one day seized and carried off, and was with difficulty rescued.

Like people in a fever, the French complain of everything outside them, whereas the evil is within them. Had they in their churches and schools sound Scriptural teaching, they would be happy and contented. But being without the knowledge of the Bible, they are restless and impatient, and know not what they want. One day, my kind Dutch doctor, at Pau, was lighting his reading-lamp, when I hastily said, "You will break that chimney, it is crooked." "Yes," he quickly replied, "it is only a French glass; in France everything is *unstraight*." His idea was political; but the remark is also true, morally and religiously. They want God's Word, and the teaching of His Spirit, to keep them "straight."

To explain this, I may mention that one day I

lost myself in a forest in France. I took, as I thought, my right bearings, and went boldly forward. But, when I began, after some time, to retrace my steps, I soon found that I was going wrong. What to do, I knew not. It was a cloudy day; and there was no sun to tell me whether I was going east or west, or north or south. After some anxiety, I at length came to an opening on a hill; and from thence I could see some distant houses which I knew. I found, however, that I had been going altogether in a wrong direction; and the faster I walked, the further I should have been travelling from my home. I then thought what an illustration is this of people wandering through the world without God's Word shining upon their path. That Word is indeed a light to our feet, both individually and nationally; and the more we look to it for guidance, the safer shall we be. "By Thy word have I kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Some ignorant people think that, if they are earnest in their religious duties, they will be sure to arrive at heaven at last. But all depends, I need not say, on whether our earnestness is rightly directed. I was in earnest, while hurrying on in that forest; but the result proved that the more earnest I was, the further I was going from home. Our dear friend, Mr. Hill, was once conversing with a Roman Catholic, whom he met on the road between Coundon and Auckland. The Roman Catholic urged this same plea of earnestness, when Mr. Hill most properly replied, "But are you on the right road to heaven? If you wanted to go to Coundon, but were going towards Auckland, the faster you went towards Auckland, the further off you would be from Coundon." The French, in their way,

are earnest—very earnest. Some of them rise at five o'clock on Sunday morning to attend mass; and in many other ways they show their earnestness. But, unhappily, those ways are not the ways of the Bible. The Bible points, not to the adoration of saints—not to the mass—not to confession—not to priestly absolution—not to human merit, as the way to heaven; but to Christ. May the knowledge of Christ and His precious word increase in France, as the best cure for its social unhappiness, and its political restlessness! May God raise up in France, as he did three hundred years ago for England, pastors after his own heart, who shall feed the French people with Scriptural knowledge and understanding! It is a fine and noble country. Its only want is "The Gospel of the grace of God."

After leaving Paris we came, *viâ* Clermont, Amiens, and Abbeville, to *Boulogne*: and there things were so comfortably arranged that we almost stepped from the railway carriage into the steamer. In about an hour and a half, after a most easy and comfortable passage across the sea, we found ourselves in the harbour of Folkestone; and there, too, the steamer was met by the railway, which speedily conveyed my sisters-in-law to London, while I stayed behind to visit friends for three days in Kent. I afterwards spent two nights in London, and one in York; and most thankful was I to find myself once more, on the 5th of July, at my own happy home, although now so desolate, at Stanhope.

I might conclude this series of letters with many reflections; but space forbids. I only make one reflection; and that is on *the force of habit*.

Things abroad which strike a stranger at first, after a time cease to do so. I was surprised, at first, to find that in France in driving along a road the coachman meets a vehicle by passing on the right and not on the left, as in England. I was surprised, too, at first, at seeing the bullock-carts, the men in blouses, wooden shoes like little boats, and so many shoeless and stockingless feet and legs. I was also surprised to see gentlemen going about with sun-shades over their heads. I was surprised, too, at the horses' bells; but soon my eyes were accustomed to these sights and sounds. The first Sunday at Arcachon I was grieved, as I was walking with the chaplain to the church, to meet so many men in their working dress; but he was so accustomed to see this that he hardly noticed the occurrence. There were, too, on a Sunday the rattling of billiard-balls, the sale of vegetables and newspapers, the open market, the performances at theatres and concert rooms, and similar Sabbath profanations; but I fear, if I had stayed longer, I should not have felt so strongly as I did at first. Such is *the force of habit*.

It is so in England likewise. If a man turns his back on God's house on the Lord's-day, or neglects to read his Bible, or omits to seek God's face in private prayer, every succeeding reproof of conscience becomes weaker and weaker; and by-and-by, *such is the force of habit*, practice becomes a second nature; and God's Spirit, being grieved, often leaves the man to follow his own devices, to his own final impenitence and everlasting destruction. It is only by keeping close to God's word, and with earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit's teaching, that we can be preserved from evil *habits*

and be saved at last for ever. In England happily we have not, in many respects, such temptations to form wrong habits, as is the case in France.

All I can say, therefore, in conclusion, is that there is, in my estimation, no place like England, with its great religious privileges. In remembrance of these I often when abroad was saying to myself, in the language of one of our children's hymns—

“ Lord, I ascribe it to *Thy* grace,
And not to chance as others do,
That I was born of Christian race,
And not a heathen or a Jew.”

I need not add, however, that these our great privileges involve great responsibilities. If much has been given to us in England, of us much will be required. We may well, therefore, each solemnly add, from the same hymn—

“ Then if this Gospel I refuse,
How shall I e'er lift up mine eyes?
For all the Gentiles and the Jews,
Against me will in judgment rise.”

The gracious promise and awful warning contained in Deut. xviii. 18, 19, refer to you and to me as much as they did to the Jews of old: “ I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” On that warning we have our Lord's own commentary in St. John xii. 48, where He says—“ He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my

words, hath one that judgeth him. *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*" In other words, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3).

C. CLAYTON.

Stanhope Rectory, July 26th, 1877.

PASTORAL LETTER.

THESE "Letters from Abroad" will be made more complete by the addition of the following address, which was written just before my departure:—

MY DEAR FRIENDS AND PARISHIONERS—

It has been my habit, as you are aware, to send you year by year a pastoral letter. The last pastoral letter was the *tenth*. I have thought it best this *eleventh* year, not to forward to you a separate address, but to speak to you a few words of counsel, encouragement, and warning through the pages of the Stanhope Magazine. In the magazine, during the year, you have learned month after month what has been going forward in the parish, as well as in the dale at large. I need not, therefore, now go over the same ground. I would rather draw your attention to some of the deeper and spiritual things of God's inspired word.

Before, however, doing this, I would say, I am very thankful that I have been able to secure the services of the Rev. E. Brownrigg, late of Wolsingham, for Eastgate and Crawley Side. We must all of us pray God largely to bless his labours in those two portions of our parish; and also we must ask God to

be with our friend the Rev. P. C. Jones, in his new sphere of ministry at Hunstanworth.

We have lost by death several of our most aged parishioners during the year. We hope they are now "with the Lord." The total number of funerals during the year has been forty-three. The number of baptisms fifty-five.

I need not repeat how much we are indebted, as a parish, to our district-visitors, our Sunday-school teachers, our choir, and other helpers.

I am thankful also to find that the circulation of the Stanhope Magazine is so steadily increasing. It has now reached four hundred and fifty monthly; and during the past year there have been distributed in the parish no fewer than five thousand two hundred and eighty copies.

Every one who visits Stanhope speaks of the great improvements that have of late taken place under the auspices of our Local Government Board. I hope, by God's grace, every one will see a similar improvement in our moral and religious condition.

The attendance of children at our schools has been, upon the whole, very satisfactory. We are sorry, however, that so many are still kept away under a variety of excuses. There is room at this moment in our schools for at least a hundred and thirty more scholars, if they can only be induced to attend.

A paper will be or has been circulated among you, entitled "Five Minutes' Explanation to Parents as to what the Law requires with Respect to the Education of their Children." In that paper, among other things, you will find that the (1876) Act of Parliament requires that "During the year 1877 every child who

is above five, and under nine years of age, must be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic; and no one, not even his or her *father* or *mother*, may employ him or her in any shop, or in any way whatever for the purposes of gain or wages." Children over nine may be employed; but only in certain cases, which that paper describes. That paper also states the penalties incurred, if the Act is disobeyed.

In our Barrington, Hartwell, and Crawley schools the children not only read God's word, but are also taught its meaning daily. In addition to which, they are examined once in each week in what they have learned during that week; and likewise they are examined by the Diocesan Inspector once each year, to inquire what amount of Holy Scripture they have been taught during that year. This annual examination as to their Scriptural knowledge, like the annual examination by Her Majesty's Inspectors in their secular instruction, stimulates the zeal alike of children, pupil-teachers, masters, mistresses, and managers; and tends, under God's blessing, to keep the religious as well as the secular course of teaching in active operation. It is my sincere hope that the new Stanhope School-Board, which will be chosen in the course of a few weeks, will feel deeply anxious for the spiritual and everlasting welfare of the children attending their schools, and that they will at once resolve, whether they are Churchmen or Dissenters, that the Bible shall be both read and explained (as Mr. J. W. Pease, our M.P., hoped would be the case), in all these rate-aided schools. The School-Boards in London, Darlington, Newcastle, Gateshead, and in most other places, have arranged to

have God's word both read and explained. I trust it will be so in Weardale likewise; in which case the chief ground why School-Boards are so unpopular with all thoughtful and pious people will be taken away.

During the past few months an effort has been made towards procuring an organ for our fine old parish-church. The result has thus far been very satisfactory, as you will have seen by the lists of subscriptions which have appeared in the last numbers of our magazine. We trust that ere long the whole amount required will be supplied, and that the instrument will soon be erected and in full use for the leading of our congregational singing.

It has been a cause of deep regret to me that, through ill health, I have been able of late to do so very little either in visiting you at your homes, or in setting before you in God's house the precious and saving truths of the Gospel of Christ. This has been to me a most severe trial; but I am aware that God is thus afflicting me for my own spiritual profit, and thereby for your spiritual profit also (Cor. ii. 1, 6). I therefore the more gladly take this opportunity of saying to you through the press that which I would otherwise have spoken to you from the pulpit.

Now, there are two great subjects which the apostles of old brought before their hearers, and which every faithful minister will bring before his parishioners. These are *repentance* and *faith*.

What is *repentance*? Repentance is change of mind. It is a change in our feelings towards sin. Repentance is the very first step in the Divine life. Till that step is taken, nothing whatever has been

done by us towards our own salvation. Have you then, my dear people, repented? Repented of your sins? It is not enough for us to say, "Yes, I know that I am a sinner. We are all of us sinners; and we must all of us repent." The question is, has each one of us repented? Are we really sorry for the past? We have often uttered with our lips the solemn words, "We have erred and strayed like lost sheep. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done. We have done those things which we ought not to have done. And there is no health in us." "We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us. The burden of them is intolerable." Did we utter those words from the heart? The more holy we become, the more sensible are we made of indwelling sin. Examples abound. The holy Job exclaimed, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The holy Isaiah confessed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." The holy and laborious St. Paul, termed himself the very chief of sinners. And such you will find to be the experience of all God's devoted servants of every clime and of each generation. It was, as some of you are aware, the confession of the learned Bishop Beveridge, "I cannot pray, but I sin. I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin. I cannot give an alms or receive the sacrament, but I sin. Nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my confessions are still aggravations of them. My repentance needs to be repented of. My tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over

again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties speak me a child of Adam. Insomuch that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception up to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin."

If these are your feelings, you know something of repentance, and also of *faith*; and you will then value, as all true *believers* do value, the atonement made by Christ for sin. You will then, too, understand the deep meaning of the Rev. J. Newton's remark which he made just before he left earth for heaven. "I am growing old. My strength is going, and my memory is failing. But whatever else I forget, there are two things which I can never forget. One is that I am a great sinner. The other is that Christ is a great Saviour." May such, by the Holy Spirit's teaching, be our experience! We shall then be happy in life, peaceful in death, and glorified in eternity.

How plain, therefore, is the way of salvation to any poor sinner, whose eyes God the Holy Ghost has in mercy opened! He now sees that Christ is his all in all. Yes, Christ's death atones for our guilt. Christ's obedience earns for us heaven. We are saved by faith. We believe that all that Christ *did* and *suffered*, while in the flesh, is set down to our account. There is, if I may so speak, a double transfer. Our guilt is transferred to Christ, for which Christ suffers. Christ's merits are transferred to us, for which we are "accounted righteous." The father of the prodigal, you will remember, not only took off his son's rags, but also put on him the best robe that he had. So

our justification consists not only in the taking away of our sins, but also in the imputation of Christ's obedience. By this mutual transfer the Lord Jesus is made both "a curse for us," and at the same time "the Lord our righteousness."

"Christ hath merited righteousness," says Hooker, "for as many as are found in Him. In Him God findeth us, if we are faithful" (full of faith), "for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we are altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man who is impious himself, full of iniquity, full of sin, him being found in Christ by faith, and having his sin remitted by repentance, him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh away the punishment due thereto by pardoning it, and accepteth him in Christ Jesus, as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded. And thus it comes to pass, that such are we in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God Himself. Let it be accounted folly, or frenzy, or fury, or whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom. We care for no knowledge in the world but this—that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered—that God hath made Himself the sin of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God."

How sad it is that any of you, our people, blinded by the god of this world, should be neglecting "this great salvation!" Yet so, alas! it is. You make all kinds of excuses why you cannot at present seek repentance, pardon, and eternal life. But remember, ye careless ones, God is not mocked. His Spirit will not always strive with you; and most awful will be

your state, if God at length gives you up to a reprobate mind, and says of you, as He said of His people of old, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." Your soul once lost, will be lost for ever. "You may excuse yourselves into hell," said Mr. Moody, in London, "but you never will be able to excuse yourselves out of it." The door will be shut; and though you may come millions and millions of years hereafter, and knock at that door, the Saviour from within will reply, "I know you not. I once called, and ye refused. During your brief life on earth, I stretched out my hand; but you did not regard Me. At Stanhope you set at nought the counsels of my word, and the entreaties of my servants; and now, as I forewarned you would be the case, I am laughing at your calamity, and am mocking at your fear and desolation. It is now too late. You now call; but I will not answer. You now seek Me; but your day of grace is past; and you shall never find Me. You are now eating the fruit of your own ways. Amid weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, you are now filled, as I formerly told you would happen, with your own devices."

My dear people, as surely as your eyes are now reading this paper, so surely will the substance of that awful sentence be delivered to the millions of the lost. It will doubtless be addressed, alas! to many of the parishioners, past and present, of Stanhope; and it will be addressed to you, my reader, unless you seek Christ, and find Christ, before these blessings are for ever hid from your eyes. But why, oh! why should any of you thus sin against your own selves? Why should you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life? Why should you not come at once to Christ, and enjoy

all the happiness on earth and all the glory in heaven which Christ has promised His believing people ?

Ponder that happiness ; and think over that glory, as it is described by one of our most learned Divines, to whom I have before referred, and with whose words I now conclude this pastoral address : “ Blessed for ever and ever,” says Hooker, “ be that mother’s child, whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory ; but concerning the man that trusteth in God—if the fire hath proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head ; if lions, beasts ravenous by nature and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man ; what in the world is there that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him ? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and God ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? No, I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall ever prevail so far over me. I know in whom I have believed. I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath been shed for me. I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power. Unto Him I commit myself. His own finger hath engraven this sentence in the tables of my heart,

‘Satan hath desired to winnow thee like wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not.’ Therefore, the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep, as a jewel, unto the end; and by labour, through the gracious mediation of His prayer, I shall keep it.”

May the Holy Spirit write these precious thoughts upon our hearts and memories! “The Lord God is,” indeed, “a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man”—woman, or child—“that trusteth in Thee.”

I remain,

Your affectionate Minister and Servant
in Christ Jesus,

CHARLES CLAYTON.

P.S.—I little imagined, a few days ago, when I was writing the foregoing address, how severe a loss I was about to sustain by the sudden removal of my beloved wife. Most sincerely do I thank you, and all my friends and neighbours, for the affectionate sympathy which you have shown towards me under this most painful dispensation. I desire to say, with Job, not only, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,” but also, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” He that gave His own dear Son to die for my sins, would not, I am certain, have so afflicted me, if He were not thereby promoting my real welfare. I pray Him to sanctify this trial to my own soul, that I may hereafter, if spared, become a channel of greater usefulness, by the Holy Spirit’s blessing, to my fellow-sinners. I am grieved to be compelled, at the suggestion of my kind medical advisers, to depart from

you for a season, that I may spend the next few months in a warmer climate. Though absent from you in body, I shall be present with you in spirit, making mention of you continually in my prayers. And God, in His infinite mercy, for Christ's sake, grant that we and our dear departed friends who sleep in Jesus may hereafter meet again, in that blessed world, where separations and tears are unknown, and where we shall be like the Saviour, and see the Saviour, for ever, as He is !

I have given directions that a copy of Mr. Fox's funeral sermon and of Mr. Wagstaff's address be presented to each family in the parish. Should any family by accident be omitted, be so good as to apply to Mr. Wagstaff. The Lord grant that the death of my precious partner may be made, by grace, the life of some dead souls ! In which case I shall esteem my great loss to be gain indeed. One soul saved ! What an infinity of misery escaped ! And what an infinity of happiness secured ! He who knows the value of souls, has told us that each single soul is worth more than the "whole world." And nothing can save that soul but the blood and righteousness of Christ through faith.

C. C.

Stanhope Rectory, Jan., 1877.

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